

Issue Paper on “Returning Phone Calls” Performance Measure

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Topic: W-2 Performance Standards survey question having to do with agencies returning phone calls within two business days. This is a recommendation to change how we measure that standard for the first contract year and in the future.

Problem Description or Issue:

The four large W-2 agencies in Milwaukee are consistently failing on the performance measure having to do with returning phone calls to participants within two business days. At issue is whether the survey method used accurately measures performance on this indicator and, if it does not, how should the standard be measured.

Background:

There are eight customer satisfaction performance standards for the W-2 agencies. One asks participants whether their W-2 or FSET “worker” returned phone calls within two business days. Only respondents who say they called their worker in the previous two months and indicate they have a reliable way of getting a phone message are included in this measure.

The four large W-2 agencies in Milwaukee are consistently failing on this measure. One explanation that has been offered stems from the fact that income maintenance functions in Milwaukee are carried out by county workers who are co-located in the W-2 agencies. The concern is that participants may be confusing the service they received from the county workers with the service they receive from the W-2 agency.

Beginning in November, the Department expanded the phone survey of Milwaukee participants to examine this question. It was discovered that, in deed, only 59 percent of respondents could correctly identify their W-2 agency FEP and 12 percent incorrectly identified a county agency worker as their W-2 agency worker.

When only those respondents who correctly identified their W-2 agency FEP are included in the performance standard measure, three of the four Milwaukee agencies were above the minimum standard of 6.5 for the month.

Alternatives:

Alternative 1: This is a proposal to do three things to address this problem.

First, we propose not using data for the first 10 months on the phone call question to measure performance for the four Milwaukee W-2 agencies. Given the results of the expanded survey, it appears that some participants are incorrectly attributing their experience with the county agency to the W-2 agencies and that affects the agencies' scores on this measure.

Second, we propose to use the results of the expanded survey of cases sampled in October, November and December to measure the performance of Milwaukee W-2 agencies on the return phone calls standard. Under this method, we would only count the responses of participants who said they had called the agency in the previous two months, had a reliable way of getting a phone message and could correctly identify a W-2 agency FEP or other W-2 agency worker whom they had called.

Third, we propose modifying the survey to require that respondents identify their FEP by name before counting the result in the performance standard.

Alternative 2: Rather than use the October, November and December expanded phone survey results to measure performance on the return phone calls questions, we could disregard this measure entirely for the first contract year for the four Milwaukee agencies. This assumes that we would begin in CY 2003 with a revised instrument that requires respondents to correctly identify their FEP before the response is counted in the performance measure.

Alternative 3: Rather than disregard this measure only for the Milwaukee agencies, we could disregard it for all agencies for the first contract year, or for only those balance of state agencies at also have income maintenance workers co-located with the W-2 agency.

Comments/Positions by External Partners:

On December 20, 2002, a motion was passed by the Contract and Implementation Committee to disregard the Question 3 measure for all agencies for the first contract year. In addition, the motion recommended that the survey be modified to require that respondents identify their FEP by name before counting results in the performance standard.

Comments by Technical Reviewers:

It is assumed that the phone survey can be modified in such a way that we can require the respondent to correctly identify their W-2 agency FEP by name. This may be a difficult and costly option. We, as yet, have not worked out the technical details or cost for such a survey modification. We may need to reconsider making a permanent modification to the survey as described above once those costs are known.

Recommendation:

It is our recommendation that we pursue Alternative 1. That is, we disregard the first 10 month of data on the return phone call question for the four Milwaukee agencies and use the results from the expanded survey of cases sampled in October, November and December to calculate performance on that measure for those agencies for the first year. We would also modify the survey so that only those respondents who are able to correctly identify their W-2 agency FEP by name are included in the performance measure.